Emily Drabinski
@edrabinski

(Agreement in this kitchen full of teachers that "the research paper is a waste of time." 😞 😞 😞)

4:06 PM • 18 Sep 2017

12 Likes

Jenna Freedman @zinelib • Sep 18
Replying to @edrabinski
Do they have alternative suggestions? Lots of group work?

Jenna Freedman @zinelib • Sep 18
Self/peer-grading?

Emily Drabinski @edrabinski • Sep 18
Dunno rolled their eyes and started gossiping

Jenna Freedman @zinelib • Sep 18
Legit.
The initial version of this print zine, which you are probably reading in print, was written as an alternative to a midterm research paper assignment for Interactive Technology and Pedagogy (ITP) Core I. The first paragraph of the Rationale and Guidelines read

There are four main reasons why scholars write papers: 1) to develop and improve their thinking on a subject; 2) to contribute to their fields; 3) to earn all the benefits that come from publication (mercenary, but true); 4) any combination of the aforementioned. As a scholar, it is perfectly legitimate for you to write this first paper simply with the goal of improving your thinking about interactive technology and pedagogy, but we strongly recommend that you consider this an opportunity to contribute to your field and to enjoy the benefits that accompany publication.

I had #1 in mind, and clearly from the zine appearing in the Journal of ITP, I achieved #3. I had another motivation, and that was to enjoy the process. I think it's the rare scholar who fully enjoys writing. I do, however, enjoy making zines, and this zine was no different. Creative non-fiction, cutting and pasting text and images, self-exploration, and engaging snarkily with theorists are fun for me. Class hadn't been so much fun; it was a lot of reading, and despite efforts to the contrary on the part of the professors, a lot of white guys, some of them dead (RIP). I mean, I suppose you have to read Marx in grad school, Moretti in every digital humanities (DH) class, and John Dewey in pedagogy, but ugh, those dudes can be dry.

Through the form of my work, a colorful, relatable zine, I attempt to push the boundaries of scholarship, and through the content, successfully or not, I'm trying to show that there are
different ways of contributing to a field than writing a scholarly paper. The zine was written in a digital humanities context, one where alternatives to the research paper are readily accepted—though digital projects are frequently required to be accompanied by a white paper.

A JITP peer-reviewer rightfully noted that reading my zine online didn't feel interactive. I will make an attempt to rectify that concern in a tangible way, but I also hope to draw the reader's attention to the interactivity of having feelings.

I asked my students to invent their own citation styles and one group included the emojis that represented the feeling you had when you first read the thing.

The same reviewer—and I am not remotely dissing them. I'm actually reveling in their generosity and care (and interaction!)—shared that they had “enjoyed reading this and read it through multiple times.” They found the zine lacking in direction, but perhaps related to it. They wanted a teaching manifesto to go with the learning manifesto you will find in the coming pages. I think the interactivity in my zine is that I am asking a question, not making an argument. As you read, I invite you to compare your experiences to my own, to relate, to judge, to care, or to dismiss, but ultimately, to think about what you would write in a pedagogy zine, and how you would convey your theories and feelings, and how you might alternately elicit the same from your students. Students are people, who, like you, are going through some stuff sometimes, stuff you may not see or know about in the classroom, but that may be inextricable from their learning.
Welcome to my Interactive Technology & Pedagogy zine. You are interacting with it right now, especially if you are holding it your hand. You can sniff it, fan yourself with it, or rip it with your teeth. You can white stuff out, write stuff in, and photocopy it with your changes. You could do all those things with a print out of a research paper, too, so why does it matter that this is a zine, with vernacular voice and images that you can interpret along with the text?

**MAYBE IT DOESN'T**

What I'm hoping matters about this being a zine, rather than a research paper, is showing that there are other ways to demonstrate knowledge than by writing a research paper.

Throughout my time at the CUNY GC—I'm in my 4th semester now—I've learned more about myself as a learner than I did in primary, secondary, undergrad, and library school combined. One of the things I've learned about myself is that sometimes my critical reading takes the form of crabby reading, where I'm looking for things to disagree with. I could unpack that a bunch in terms of activist and call-out culture, but I'll leave that for another zine.

At the college where I work, the general education requirements, until very recently, were called the "9 Ways of Knowing." The WAC/WID, Digital Pedagogy, and the CUNY Context week readings got me to wondering into Barnard and Elbow and the WAC crew's smug faces if there might also be 9 ways of showing.
This zine is an effort to explore that idea.

The PWBATs (Professor Will Be Able To) I hope you, dear readers, will achieve in reading this zine:

- Agree that the student is a competent writer
- Check off student mastery of the course readings
- Get a good sense of the student's involvement with the course material
- Gain new insights into your own teaching and learning styles
- Take pleasure in reading and grading one fewer ten-page paper

Weirdo zine librarian stuff:

(FU) (fair use)
(DND) (do not digitize)

LCSH (Library of Congress subject headings)

Education—Study and teaching.
Learning—Anecdotes.
City University of New York—Students.

655 7 Zines. $2 lcgt
655 4 School zines.
BECAUSE as a crabby reader I read the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) proposal and Peter Elbow's High Stakes essay as saying that writing is the only way to show mastery of a topic...

BECAUSE whether or not I crabily misread the proposal and essay there is more than one way to demonstrate academic mastery of a concept

BECAUSE I think that while writing is an essential skill for many it is not the only way to communicate

BECAUSE not all college graduates will rely on writing in their professional lives, academics' erase students' experience when they indicate otherwise

BECAUSE difference should be not only accommodated but celebrated

BECAUSE there is more than one kind of literacy

BECAUSE I value cultural literacy and emotional intelligence as much as I do the ways that people value and perform a certain kind of success

BECAUSE we learn to know not only with our pen (or word processor), but with our eyes, ears, emotions, etc.

I DECLARE that there are multiple ways of knowing there must be also be multiple ways of showing
These are the "9 ways of knowing" per the recently replaced Barnard College Curriculum. Fall 2016
Reading over this autoethnography, I'm embarrassed.

It feels superior, whiny, and reminds me of the chemistry test with snarky answers I wanted to use as my college application essay. I was finally convinced, I don't remember by whom, to use a different piece of writing instead. I turned in a heavily descriptive creative writing assignment about my toddler sister. It showed that I could write, but not that I had done any thinking about college.

Sigh.

As you'll read in the following pages, I didn’t have—or seek—a lot of help in school, or even library school. Now that I’m in DH school—and teach myself—I’m conscious of pedagogy, and care about it! In my autoethnography, I explore my learning process and factors that influence(d) it, or didn’t, I suppose. I think that even in a seminar class, students and faculty do not get to know one another as well as they might. We’re not necessarily in a grad program to be seen by one another, but having a greater grip on one another’s realities and experiences might improve the depth of our learning.

Do I want to hear all of my classmates’ life stories? Let’s be honest; the answer is an emphatic NO. Should I want to know more about the factors that affect my classmates’ lives than I actually do? Probably, but I definitely don’t want to go around the table and hear or offer up their awkward iterations. I would be interested their short videos, music compositions, art installations, tweet galleries, solo performances, and zines, though! Interested, for sure, informed? That, too. Enhanced, you bet!
I reach into my desk. Take out *History of the American People Volume 1* and clean house. Cross out all the pages about shit that's got nothing to do with me. What's left? Not much. The teacher keeps clicking through his slideshow until he hears the silence of the other kids. Until he hears the slashing of my pen.

“Macy!” he whips around, blinking in the light of the projector. “What are you doing?”

I guess he is no longer ignoring my behavior. “Are you angry?” I crack my knuckles. “Or are you pissed?”

If he were a cartoon, smoke would be pouring out his ears. A kid coughs as if he can smell it. “Put the Sharpie down, Macy. Vandalism will not be tolerated. You—”

“Vandalism? I'm not vandalizing any more than you. I'm just deciding which words count and which ones don't. Which words mean something and which don't. That's exactly what you do.”
I admit I'm not the most disciplined learner. My parents are both educated people. When I was a kid they both had professional master's degrees, and my dad earned his Ph.D. when I was in high school. It's impressive that he got through it. He's not the most disciplined learner either.

I sure didn't learn any study techniques from either of my parents. Like me now, they were both workaholics when I was growing up and too busy with their own work to ask my sister and me about our homework. I remember being at Ellen Shusman's house for lunch in maybe 4th grade, and being taken aback when her mom asked her what her homework was. I was just as floored to be served Coca-Cola, or even to be served lunch at all, really, since my mom, who even though she worked from home, was usually seeing a client (in her basement psychotherapy practice) during Jefferson elementary school lunch hour.
I guess I’m literally telling tales out of school when I report that I was a somewhat neglected kid. In a loving, middle class sort of way, where I was never in physical harm, but where I didn’t get a lot of support in terms of toothbrushing, bedtiming, or study habits. (Supposedly Mrs. Shusman really wanted to give me a bath, and my 4th grade teacher, whom I hated, called my mother in once to tell her I needed one. At some point that year I moved my school desk into a classroom closet).

I got by on being smart through elementary school. I killed at standardized testing, scoring in the 90+ percentiles in everything. When I was 8. Nature and early nurture were on my side.
Just as the Gray Wolf remains as a fully wild version of our domestic dogs, the Wild Boars that gave us our domestic pigs present a stark and at times exceedingly dangerous contrast to the domestic animal. Wild Boars are located across Europe and Western Asia, inhabiting a range of woodland and farmland habitats. While our habit of eating pigs causes us to think of them as prey items, the Wild Boar is a hunter in its own right, and may even bring down deer. These animals frequently place humans on the run with their extremely bad temper and tendency to attack in a ferocious flurry of razor sharp tusks. Wild Boar charges may at times be fatal due to the power and mass of the enraged animals, which may respond with force to any perceived invasion of territory.
I was angry and depressed and resistant and underparented in junior high school. I had few friends. The classes I remember from those years are earth science and biology. In 8th grade earth science, the teacher introduced lecture style teaching. I was okay with it. My best learning memory is from biology, where Mr. Mulvahill gave us nine of the ten questions from the final in advance. We knew exactly what was on the test, so it was on us to learn it. For a long time after, I could tell you precisely what would happen to a ham and cheese on rye after you ate it. I got an A on that test for sure, but I don't remember how my grades were during the rest of jr. high. Mostly I remember when I got mean girled at lunch, and how much I hated my sister and my parents and myself. Teachers think they're important, and they are, but I'm not sure how many jr. high teacher names I can recall, much less what went on in their classrooms. Somehow it's mostly male teachers I remember, including Mr. Brown, who told me to keep my knees together, or he could see up to my belly button. I was still in honors classes anyway, but not getting support. (Woe is me, right? Poor middle class white girl!)
My parents separated when I was 15, and in tenth grade I moved with my father to another town, another state. I was starting fresh, and I made friends practically the first day. I was a middle class New Jersey girl in upper class Westchester. High school is better for weirdos than jr. high is for sure. I had tried to conform at Edison Jr. High, but it wasn’t really in my heart or skillset. I wasn’t in any honors classes at Fox Lane High School. I think my dad didn’t know to have me tested or that he needed to push. I was off the smart kid track, but in a way, that allowed me to grow for the first time in ages. I took what in NY was “Math 2,” and which in smart kid tracking in NJ was geometry, and which
I’d taken as a 9th grader, but not remotely mastered. Getting to take it again helped me learn it.

My father was less prepared than ever to see to my homework, and I was even more angry and depressed. I didn’t speak to my mother for six months. I had shit going on in my home life. The biggest success of high school for me was making friends: I hung out with the theater kids and the burnouts. I wasn’t a burnout, but I admired them.

Both crowds had lots of smart kids in them, though the hippie burnouts weren’t as well represented in the National Honor Society as the theater kids were. I managed to graduate with an 85ish average. I learned the basics of writing a paper. Fox Lane was in a district with some hella rich towns. There were four lacrosse teams: Varsity, two JV, and freshman. Fox Lane graduates go to college.
Despite that, I hadn't been coached on college. I went to a theater program all morning and don't remember attending any meetings with my guidance counselor. If I had, I would have at least gotten a Regent's Scholarship. I wanted to be in the best theater program I could get into, but that extra money and just as importantly, the validation that I had done well on the SAT would have been nice. My father and stepmother said they couldn't (wouldn't?) pay for anything beyond a state university. I went to SUNY New Paltz, and again, was more focused on social life, activism, and the theater department than on academics. I continued to do mostly fine, but sometimes not fine. I got a B- in creative writing. Wtf? My father and stepmother were involved with their young kids, and my mother was still busy with her therapy practice and her disgusting husband. I was in school full-time, learning to be an adult, directing plays, and finally popular and having boyfriends, so classes, whatevs. I did love my intro to sociology class and was a solid student, for probably the only class outside my major in all of undergrad. I wonder what would have happened if campus politics and theater weren't all-consuming. Might I have learned to learn doing a sociology major?

One of the most memorable things I learned came from acting class: how to pay attention to what was in front of me and to answer the question being asked. I never became a good actor, but being real and in the moment upped my emotional intelligence.

The crux of this exploration of learning in college is that I was not really in college to gain the kind of knowledge professors are there to share.
I graduated from college, and moved to NYC with my alcoholic boyfriend. I lived on minimum wage. I worked first in bookstores and later as a theater technician, which paid twice as much as bookstore clerking, and where I learned, if not to learn, to work hard. Blue collar, even in the arts, is blue collar. I learned to work with a team, I learned how to tie a clove hitch, how to build scaffolding, how to climb anything and balance on a pipe while tightening screws with a wrench that was an extension of my arm. I didn’t learn enough about electricity to become a master electrician, but I learned how to troubleshoot, which is one of the best skills I have in my toolkit in practical living.

When I went to grad school the first time, to study library science, I was petrified. I’d barely written papers in undergrad. For the first time in my academic career, I knew that I didn’t know how to study or learn. I didn’t have library experience to fall back on, though I was the daughter of a librarian and had a lot of high-powered library friends. My father was a “famous” librarian, as much as such a thing can exist.
I was a monster student in library school. I'd moved away from NYC to Tampa, Florida, where I didn't know anyone. I had no friends, no outside work, just a graduate assistantship. I did all the reading. I was active in the school's American Library Association chapter. I spoke up in class. I started my papers ages before they were due. I made friends, too, one who is my bestie to this day, seventeen years later.

Were my teachers any better than they had been when I was a child or in college? Probably not. In all likelihood, they were worse, because as we discussed in class when Luke Waltzer visited, in many programs, professors aren't taught to teach.

I took in-person and one online class. I wish I had a screenshot of the WebCT environment. LOL.
I was an adult-learner and self-motivated. A lot of what I learned was on the job, though (sorry, Dewey: both John and Melvil). I served as a research assistant to two professors, and later I worked in the media center, and finally at the main reference desk as a volunteer in special collections. The reference GA program provided extensive training, mostly in databases, but we did also have the opportunity to teach library research classes. My takeaway is that I'm a learn-by-doer.
There are times that I'm less kinesthetic and more visual or reading learner. A lot of my critical thinking comes from the 5,000 intersectional feminist zines I've read. And cataloged. I think the R doesn't work for me, at least not when done in a passive way. The fact that I'm cataloging the zines—taking notes, carefully choosing subject headings to describe them, connecting with the writer/artist, makes all the difference. Or maybe the difference is that zines are usually personal. I am a voracious reader—of fiction and memoirs.

Straight-up nonfiction—meh. I learned from a psychology professor at my college's new student orientation that with course readings, you basically have to bring the active learning component yourself. Did you know highlighting is useless? Cognitive scientists say it is. You have to take notes in the margins, and for me, that's kinesthetic, or maybe it's the silent W in the VARK R? Write? But maybe what I am is an emotional learner.

That's a funny revelation to me because I'm not an emotional person. And yet, as a heavy fiction reader, according to a Scientific Study, I'm more likely than the control group to be empathetic, to pick up on other people's emotions.

Being a K, i.e., learning-by-doing, is easier when you're a full-time student with few external responsibilities than it is when
you're a full-time worker taking one class and have an hour+ commute and a spouse and anxiety and things are deterioriating at your job.

This time around in grad school, I'm a committed student, mostly because I've got the overachiever thing going on. But I'm not full-time, so I can't do as much learning-by-doing as I would like, and as I think is necessary for acquiring new skills. I'm neurotic about homework. I devote all day Saturday to reading and plan vacation days around big projects.

Over the years, influenced by zines and exposure to critical theory, but also by sexism, racism, homophobia, capitalism, etc., I've become a critical thinker, sometimes to a fault. vis à vis Kahdeidra's comment about "social justice warriors" in class last week. I think because I'm overtaxed, or maybe because I have a contrary nature, I'm a bit of a crabby reader, picking fights with the writers and refusing to accept their authority just because they have it at the moment.

Thanks, Freire and politico parents! Thanks and apologies, professors, for I must not always be a joy to have in class.
(Whining): If I've seen Ira Shor speak, do I really have to read all this #Freire? #CUNYGCITP

Jenna Freedman @zinelib
Why does #Freire dismiss animals? My cats are plenty critical. #CUNYGCITP #critped #critquadupeds twitter.com/zinelib/status...

3:26 PM - 14 Oct 2017 from Brooklyn, NY

2 Likes 🧡 🧡

Tweet your reply

Maura Smale @mauraweb · Oct 14
Replying to @zinelib
Lol

Jenna Freedman @zinelib · Oct 14
When you’re my teacher next semester I might have to block you. 😅 😅

Maura Smale @mauraweb · Oct 14
Extra lol

Reading @WDDeresiewicz's Neoliberal Arts I thought he was an old crank. Right, but old. He's 3 years older than me. Are we cranks or old cranks?
Deresiewicz does come across as a crank, but he’s not wrong in his frustration with college as vocational school, with its emphasis on professional education. That appears to be what students want, too, including the Princeton educated kid who argues that he’s “incentivized” to go to Wall Street. Deresiewicz wants college to be a site of thinking and learning (he uses this phrase rather than “teaching and learning”) and remarks on the perceived value of college and likens students to customers. He addresses that even if colleges are emphasizing skills over reflective learning, professors are unprepared to teach the “organizational skills, interpersonal skills” that would help them succeed in business. And don’t get him—or me—started on “leadership.”

Reading Peter Elbow for class & thinking about ways of knowing & need for different ways of showing knowledge. #pedagogy #stakes

I wish Elbow wouldn't write "obvious" and "obviously" so often.
Elbow is the writer who inspired this zine—for better or for worse. I was moved by his assertion of the power of low-stakes assignments and grading, but challenged by the idea that writing should be our highest priority. Maybe he didn’t come out and say that, but that’s what I got, even from his exploration of nonverbal knowing. In contrast to Deresiewicz, he uses some business language in a positive framing like wanting students to “prosper” in their non-writing classes.

I appreciated many of his points, though, including his acknowledging students and professors as people. People who are grumpy when they grade and who better show themselves when using a “clear, alive voice” in their writing. I thought to myself about how his method might also better teach students how to revise, something I never learned.
Reading Mina Shaughnessy for class, I appreciate that she refers to her subjects as "writers," rather than "students." #pedagogy

Of a basic writing student, she reports "discovered...that writing gave him access to thoughts and feelings he had not reached any other way."

Another thought while reading Shaughnessy: welcoming someone is also acknowledging them as an outsider, at least up until that time.
Shaughnessy's text is meant to be practical, which speaks to me as more of a doer than a thinker (which I guess would get me in trouble with Deresiewicz. I have an art and a professional degree, so...). I appreciated her emphasis on teacher preparedness, rather than on whether students, or as she always refers to them, "writers," are able to do college level work.

Her major failing, to my mind, was, unlike Elbow, seeing her writers as people—people with lives outside school, people with lives that might be very different from hers with her rural upbringing and elite education. As with the other authors I am reviewing here, there was no discussion of different learning styles. Maybe that, along with her emphasis on errors, is a negative outcome of her practicality, that she is focused on getting the task done.
Reading Clark Kerr for class and all I can think of is #MarioSavio eviscerating him. #multiversity #ugh

"Students also involve the university in the national political controversies of the moment." Yeah they do, Clark Kerr. #SorryNotSorry

"Jefferson tried a system of student self-gov't in the 1920s but quickly abandoned it when all the profs tendered their resignations." LOL

Now Chancellor Kerr is on about how students revolt against faculty. In my experience, it's administrators students challenge, dude.
So, clearly I went into this reading biased. My parents were in school at UC Berkeley in 1963, and my father was involved in the Free Speech Movement. I even met Mario Savio when I was in college. We had coffee or a meal, and I most likely embarrassed myself. Now I’m a college administrator (that’s what librarians are at Barnard, not faculty, like at CUNY), and perhaps again biased against college and university muckety-mucks. So, with my biases out there...

I found his writing to be nostalgic, even reactionary, for times when college students and faculty were good little boys, probably because they were in school for a moral education, as well as academic learning. Of eighteenth century institutions in Europe he writes, “There was something almost splendid in their disdain for contemporary events.” I sometimes feel the same way about Barnard’s big brother university, Columbia’s president, noted First Amendment guy Lee Bollinger, who is screwing up left and write these days over student protests. Recently 100 faculty wrote him a letter telling him to stand the hell down on prosecuting students who protested a white supremacist invited to campus by College Republicans. WTH?!?

Like Elbow, Kerr uses business language, referring to students as “consumers,” who influence the university by their choices. OH, POOR POWERLESS CHANCELLOR. He’s
bugged by all the constituencies he has to please, and I get that it's hard, but *come on*. That's why he was paid the big bucks. And there's no need to call people's interests "frivolous." He seems to hate everyone, especially the people that are the biggest contributors: "football stars and professional luminaries"...former do little studying and the latter little teaching, and so they form a neat combination of muscle and intellect." Is he really calling scholar athletes a bunch of dummies and distinguished professors nothing but Brainiac slackers?

Sorry, boo. I get that you're frustrated, but I don't know what it is that you want.
I hereby invite you to fill in your own teaching manifesto. For maximum interaction, if you send it to me, I'll publish it to my blog: lowereastsidelibrarian.info and add appropriate emoji.

BECAUSE as a(n) adjective teacher

BECAUSE whether or not I

BECAUSE I think that

BECAUSE not all school level students
BECAUSE difference should

BECAUSE there is more than one

BECAUSE I value

BECAUSE we teach

I DECLARE
“10 Most Downright Ferocious Or Ill Tempered Animals - Listverse.”
https://listverse.com/2013/06/27/10-most-downright-ferocious-or-ill-tempered-animals/.

http://www.readersbillofrights.info/content/changed-date-critical-pedagogy-and-library-instruction-event.


